

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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E.O. 116#2: N/A
TAGS: EAID, UNDP, CE, MV

SUBJ: 24TH UNDP GOVERNING COUNCIL: UNDP REPORT ON ITS FUTURE
ROLE

REF: STATE 086320

1. EMBOFF DISCUSSED SUBJECT REPORT AND DEPARTMENT'S STUDY
WITH UDP RESREP FOR SRI LANKA AND MAADIVES, M. J. PRIESTLEY.
AS PRIESTLY HAD JUST RECEIVED BUT NOT READ A COPY OF REPORT,
CONVERSATION WAS BASED ENTIRELY ON REFTEL AND REFLECTED HIS
LINITIAL REACTIONS. HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ANOTHER
TALKE WITH EMBOFF AFTER HE HAD READ REPORT.

2. PRIESTLEY ADMITTED PROBLEM OF EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK
HAS BEEN A WEAK POINT OF UNDP. HE SAID THERE IS A GREAT
NEED FOR MORE SCIENTIXIC SELF-EVALUATION AND UNDP HAS NOT MADE
PROPER USE
OF THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE OF FIELD STAFFS.

3. IN HIS EXPERIENCE, PRESENT RESREP SYSTEM HAS WORKED WELL,
BUT PRIESTLEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAS BEEN FORTUNATE IN THAT
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HEADS OF SPECIALIZED AGENCIES WITH WHOM HE HAS WORKED HAVE
BEEN VERY COOPERATIVE. HE SAID OTHER RESREPS HAVE NOT BEEN
SO FORTUNATE AND PERHAPS RESREPS' AUTHORITY SHOULD BE FOR-
MALLY STRENGTHENED. GIVEN POLITICAL REALITIES OF UN, HOWEVER,
PRIESTLEY WAS NOT SURE ANY SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE COULD BE MADE
IN PRESENT SYSTEM. SOME SPECIALIZED AGENCIES ARE VERY JEALOUS
OF THEIR INDEPENDENCE, HAVE STRONG POLITICAL BACKING, AND

WOULD NOT YIELD TO CENTRALIZESI

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4. PRIESTLEY THOUGHT UNDP FIELD OFFICES COULD HANDLE GREATER WORKLOADS AND MORE VARIOUS FUNCTIONS. HE CONSIDERS FIELD STAFFS AS INEXPENSIVE, ESTABLISHED ASSETS WHICH ARE NOT BEING USED TO MAXIMUM. HE SAID THERE WAS NO REASON TO LIMIT FIELD OFFICE ACTIVITIES TO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. AS FAR AS PRIESTLEY IS CONCERNED, UNDP FIELD OFFICES SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ASSIST IN ANY DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY DESIRED BY HOST GOVERNMENTS. IN THE CASE OF SRI LANKA, HOWEVER, GSL PREFERS TO HANDLE ITS OWN COORDINATION AND ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT NEEDS. WHILE PRIESTLEY FEELS GSL NEEDS HELP IN THIS AREA, UNDP CANNOT FORCE ITSELF INTO THIS ROLE.

5. ALTHOUGH ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ARE NEEDED, PRIESTLEY WAS NOT VERY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT CHANCES OF OBTAINING THEM. LONG-TERM CONTRIBUTIONS ARE HIGHLY DESIRABLE, BUT MOST COUNTRIES (HE SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED US AND UK -- PRIESTLEY IS UK CITIZEN) NOT WILLING TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR MORE THAN ONE YEAR. HE DID NOT SEE MUCH CHANCE OF LEGISLATURES CHANGING THEIR ATTITUDES ON THIS SUBJECT. WHILE SRI LANKA HAS DONE A SMALL AMOUNT OF COST SHARING, PRIESTLEY DID NOT THINK MANY LDCS COULD AFFORD A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF COST SHARING.

6. PRIESTLEY WAS EMPHATIC THAT A SINGLE GENERAL UNDP FUND WAS MORE EFFICIENT THAN SEPARATE FUNDS. DESPITE THIS VIEW, HOWEVER, PRIESTLEY SAID SOME SPECIALIZED AGENCIES (E.G., LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POPULATION FUND) ARE ABLE TO OBTAIN MORE MONEY INDEPENDENTLY THAN THEY WOULD PROBABLY RECEIVE FROM AN OVERALL GENERAL FUND.

7. IN COMMENTING ON DEPARTMENT'S STUDY, PRIESTLEY SAID THAT UNDP SHOULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO AS MANY COUNTRIES AS DESIRE AND NEED IT. WHILE THERE MAY COME A TIME WHEN AN LDC HAS DEVELOPED TO POINT THAT UNDP ASSISTANCE WAS NO LONGER NEEDED, PRIESTLEY THOUGHT UNDP HAD SUFFICIENT FLEXIBILITY TO ADJUST ITS PROGRAMS TO ACCOMMODATE A COUNTRY'S CHANGING DEVELOPMENT STATUS. HE FELT ONLY OPEC COUNTRIES WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO ACCEPT UNDP ASSISTANCE ON A COST REIMBURSABLE BASIS.

8. PRIESTLEY CHARACTERIZED UNDP GOVERNING COUNCIL'S PAPER WORK PROBLEM AS A "DISASTER" AND THOUGHT A STANDING INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE WOULD ONLY ADD TO THE PAPER FLOW. A SINGLE ANNUAL SESSION OF THE COUNCIL WOULD HELP TO REDUCE THE LOAD OF PAPER WORK.

9. IN HIS EXPERIENCE, PRIESTLEY SAID, MOST RECIPIENT COUNTRIES PREFER COUNTRY RATHER THAN REGIONAL PROGRAMS. WHILE INTER-COUNTRY PROGRAMS MAY BE NECESSARY FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND OTHER CROSS-BORDER PROBLEMS, PRIESTLEY SAID THAT WHEN IT COMES TIME TO DIVIDE UP GLOBAL RESOURCES EACH COUNTRY WANTS TO CONTROL ITS SHARE.

10. PRIESTLEY IS IN WASHINGTON FOR SRI LANKA DONOR'S MEETING APRIL 29, AND CAN PRESUMABLY BE REACHED THERE OR IN CARE OF UNDP NEW YORK OVER NEXT FEW DAYS IN EVENT DEPARTMENT OR USUN SHOULD WISH TO PURSUE THESE MATTERS FURTHER WITH HIM. HE IS MOST APPROACHABLE AND FRANKLY HAVING HAD NEARLY FIVE YEARS UNDP SERVICE HERE PRECEDED BY FOUR YEARS IN SAMOA, AND IS MUCH ACCUSTOMED TO WORKING WITH AMERICANS (HE MARRIED ONE).
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